

# **\*The Pinnacle of Divine Mysticism in the Supplications of the Month of Sha'ban\***

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\*"An Exegesis on Selected Passages from the Sha'ban Supplication"\*

أَعُوذُ بِاللّٰهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَ صَلَّيْ اللّٰهُ عَلَي مُحَمَّدٍ وَ آلِهِ الطَّاهِرِينَ وَ لَعْنَةُ اللّٰهِ عَلَي أَعْدَائِهِمْ أَجْمَعِينَ

I seek refuge in Allah from the accursed Satan.

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the worlds, and blessings be upon Muhammad and his pure progeny, and may the curse of Allah be upon all their enemies.

إِلٰهِي هَبْ لِي كَمَالَ الْإِنْقِطَاعِ إِلَيْكَ وَ أَنْرِ أَبْصَارَ قُلُوبِنَا بِضِيَاءِ نَظَرِهَا إِلَيْكَ حَتَّى تَخْرِقَ أَبْصَارُ الْقُلُوبِ حُجُبَ النُّورِ فَتَصِلَ إِلَى مَعْدِنِ الْعِظَمَةِ وَ تَصِيرَ أَرْوَاحُنَا مُعَلَّقَةً بِعِزِّ قُدْسِكَ

By the grace of Allah, we have benefited from this noble and soul-nourishing supplication, accompanied by the melodious recitation of our esteemed brother. We hope that such efforts are pleasing to the Almighty and receive the attention of the Awaited Savior (may Allah hasten his reappearance and may our souls be sacrificed for the dust beneath his feet). May the Almighty grant this gathering His special attention and accept it in the best manner from the organizer and all participants. As I stand before my honored brothers and sisters, it is most fitting to outline some general points regarding this esteemed Sha'ban supplication, which encompasses lofty themes; although discussing this supplication is indeed a challenging task requiring a distinct eloquence and spirit.

According to reports, this supplication is a dialogue, an expression of yearning and affection from the Commander of the Faithful and his descendants: in other words, it represents their passionate engagement with the Lord of the Universe. Certain passages in this supplication contain themes that transcend our comprehension. We merely repeat its words; we may grasp some of its superficial meanings, but truly understanding its depth and profundity—as articulated by the infallible—is beyond the reach of ordinary individuals, even those recognized as mystics; let alone for someone like myself who is ensnared by the residues of materiality, earthly attachments, and personal desires. Nevertheless, we hope that the Almighty grants us even a drop from the vast oceans of knowledge and love contained within it.

#### \*The Context of the Sha'ban Supplication\*

From beginning to end, this supplication presents a series of insights and truths about the cosmos: it speaks of the origin of existence, the richness and greatness of the Creator, the weakness and poverty of the created, and the divine love that emphasizes that there is nothing besides Him, and all else is darkness and confusion. These themes are articulated in such a way that if a person reads them with attention, particularly through repetition, their spiritual essence penetrates deep into the soul, infusing the very core of one's being.

This supplication embodies the essence of mysticism. It is important to note that the mysticism we refer to is that which is endorsed by the Ahl al-Bayt (the Prophet's family) and the family of revelation, not the kind that has been misrepresented and wrongfully labeled as mysticism due to misinterpretation and misuse. Our reference

to mysticism pertains to those who adhere to the teachings of the Prophet and his family, such as Salman and Kumayl, and to those who were nurtured under the guidance of Imam Baqir and Imam Sadiq, and their successors, extending to this day.

While one may encounter discussions in theological, philosophical, or mystical texts, the true essence of those meanings does not penetrate the depths of the soul, nor does it manifest in the heart and spirit. However, the supplications transmitted from the Imams can permeate the depths of the soul and actualize one's existence in relation to those truths, enabling one to perceive and experience their luminosity. Even individuals who may not be well-versed in scientific terminology—this is not to suggest that ignorance is a virtue, for the true path is one of knowledge and understanding—can discover the results and ultimate objectives of such knowledge through the acts of worship, remembrance, supplication, and their constant engagement with these prayers and truths.

A wealth of supplications with profound themes has been preserved for us by the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt, which carry significant educational and formative impacts; they articulate true knowledge and foster human development. Thanks to Allah, these insights—despite all the pressures and efforts made by tyrants and usurpers to eliminate them—have remained embedded within texts until today, reaching us. Such examples include Dua Kumayl, Dua al-Sabah, Dua al-Jawshan, Dua al-Arafah, Sahifa al-Sajjadiyyah, the supplications of Ramadan, and various visits and supplications thereafter. Among these supplications, some are truly regarded as gems of invocations. Each of these supplications differs from one another in terms of themes and meanings, in terms of words, and in terms of the rhythm and music of the expressions. Whatever the reason may be, it was certainly not without wisdom. These supplications are designed to elevate human knowledge regarding creation

and resurrection, to enhance thought and deepen understanding of the essence of existence, as well as to provide moral education and the acquisition of noble human traits.

Among the gems of supplications is this noble prayer and the supplication of the Imams in the blessed month of Sha'ban, which is known as the Sha'ban supplication. This supplication has always attracted the attention of scholars, true mystics, and those with spiritual and mystical states. The late Muhaddith Qummi states: Although this supplication is associated with the month of Sha'ban, and it was the supplication of the Commander of the Faithful and the Imams in this month, it is suitable to be recited whenever one has a heartfelt presence. This indicates that this supplication has been highly regarded. Fortunately, after the revered Imam Khomeini—who himself was a nurturer of souls and a purifier of hearts—expressed special attention towards this supplication, it has indeed gained wider recognition.

Each portion of this supplication holds profound knowledge and educational themes that resonate throughout the entirety of this prayer. In fact, this supplication, on one hand, outlines philosophy—in its broadest sense—delving into the essence of existence: What is existence? What is the origin of existence? What is the ultimate goal of existence? What are the Divine Names? What role does man play in this world? How should he conduct himself? What characteristics does he possess? What are the inner weaknesses of humanity? On the other hand, it also addresses moral and educational dimensions. A person cannot merely rely on knowledge to attain his ultimate goal and human perfection; he must also undergo education. The educational tools utilized in this supplication are transformative. If one becomes accustomed to this supplication and recites it with awareness of its meanings, one's spirit is refined, uplifted, and gradually conditioned to connect with the realm of

meaning. As stated within this noble supplication: "O Allah, let our spirits be suspended and connected to Your Sacred Essence."

By reciting this supplication, the spirit ascends moment by moment, rising higher and higher until it is liberated from the sediments of materiality and draws closer to the source of existence. In a state of preparedness, we recite:

"O Allah, grant me the perfection of turning towards You, and illuminate the eyes of our hearts with the light of their gaze towards You, until the eyes of our hearts pierce through the veils of light and reach the source of greatness, and our spirits become suspended by the glory of Your sanctity."

We articulate certain phrases and repeat words, even delineating meanings for ourselves, yet the profundity and loftiness of these meanings are such that if individuals like us, with our limited capacities, were to grasp their truth, it might be impossible to continue living. An analogous situation occurred with Humam—despite his elevated spirit—when he approached the Commander of the Faithful, Ali, and requested a description of the qualities of the righteous. The Imam delivered a profound sermon, leading Humam to cry out and faint. If we were to comprehend these meanings, at the very least, we would be overwhelmed and lose consciousness. Nevertheless, if we are unable to reach the heights, we should at least whisper these meanings at a lower level and, within our limited capacities, take a sip from this ocean of mercy and blessings. In the presence of the Almighty, we express:

"O Allah, grant me the perfection of turning towards You."



This means that one should detach oneself from all that is other than Allah and have no attachment or dependency on anything besides Him—be it wealth, children, spouse, status, or any worldly matters, and even from heaven and hell, focusing solely on Allah, the Most High. This is the perfection of detachment; to realize that everything besides Allah holds no intrinsic value. All that exists is futile. Nothing possesses any power. Everything derives from Allah; all powers, all blessings, all mercies, and all existence belong to Him. Even if we have found some success in articulating our thoughts, it is only by the grace of Allah that we are able to do so.

“Whenever You grant me success in goodness, You are my guide toward it, and the path to it is through You.”

We must acknowledge that everything besides Allah amounts to nothing but degradation and poverty. Attaining these truths, touching and feeling them, is not simple. While expressing them is not overly difficult, achieving a state where one embodies and comprehensively understands this truth, naturally reflecting it in one's actions, is not easily attainable.

"My dear friends, the travelers of the deserts towards the refuge of the beloved are numerous, yet the ones who reach the destination are few."

The remembrance of Allah should encompass the entirety of one's being, ensuring that there is no negligence but rather constant presence, never diverting the gaze of truth from the beloved's countenance.

"Everyone has movements towards distant heights, yet steadfastness among men is rare."

Indeed, the remembrance of Allah must become a part of one's very essence; it should not merely reside on the tongue. Of course, it should also be verbalized, as it is necessary. Just as we read in the noble supplication of Kumayl: "O Allah, make my tongue fervent with Your remembrance." **واجعل لسانِي بِذِكْرِكَ لَهْجًا**

However, this verbal remembrance is not sufficient. It is merely the initial stage of the journey. If one truly remembers Allah and remains free from negligence, then one can begin to comprehend what it means to turn towards Allah, thereby requesting the perfection of that detachment from Him. What is the outcome of attaining the perfection of turning towards Him? "O Allah, grant me the perfection of turning towards You, and illuminate the eyes of our hearts with the light of their gaze towards You, until the eyes of our hearts pierce through the veils of light." A person reaches a state where even the luminous veils between them and Allah are lifted, reaching the source of greatness, with all curtains drawn aside. There are two types of veils and curtains:

1. Sometimes, the veils are dark. These veils, which afflict people like us, consist of sins, worldly attachments, desires for status, and enslavement to spouse and children, among other things, which are indeed dark veils.



2. However, sometimes the veils that exist between the servant and Allah are luminous veils. It is crucial for a person to transcend these veils as well in order to reach the divine source of greatness. The luminous veils may include one's worship and knowledge. Knowledge is light. Worship is light. Even entrance into paradise is light; however, if one desires to reach the very source and essence of light, even these can become obstacles. The extent of the detachment towards Allah is of such a superior rank that even knowledge and worship can become hindrances, and indeed, some manifestations of divine names and attributes—among other things that I do not wish to elaborate on at this moment—can obstruct the path to the source of greatness. This state is referred to in some expressions as "annihilation in Allah," where one sees nothing but Allah, and if they see anything else, they see it through the lens of Allah.

"The eyes of the hearts pierce through the luminous veils."

"With that special light through which they gaze upon the Almighty."

"And our spirits become suspended by the glory of Your sanctity."

At that point, there is no intermediary between the servant and Allah. All that exists is Allah. In this state, one attains the final degree of human perfection.

\*Where is the Place of Divine Glory?\*

Where is this place of divine glory? Where is this high place? Similar expressions have been mentioned in the Holy Quran, Nahj al-Balagha, and some other texts. Perhaps we can understand the location of divine glory to some extent by comparing these. In the Holy Quran, the "Supreme Assembly" is mentioned in two places. In one instance, Allah commands His Prophet and says:

(مَا كَانَ لِي مِنْ عِلْمٍ بِالْمَلَأِ الْأَعْلَى إِذْ يَخْتَصِمُونَ)

"I had no knowledge of the Supreme Assembly when they argued."

When Allah declared to the angels that He wished to create Adam, they questioned, "Will You create someone who causes corruption and sheds blood while we glorify You?" Allah responded: (إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ) "Indeed, I know that which you do not know." In the verse in question, Allah commands the Prophet to say, "I had no knowledge of the Supreme Assembly when they argued." I had no knowledge of the Supreme Assembly, nor had I read any book, nor had I heard from anyone, and I could not reach it through ordinary knowledge; it was divine teaching.

In another instance, Allah mentions the expulsion of the devils from the Supreme Assembly:

(لَا يَسْمَعُونَ إِلَى الْمَلَأِ الْأَعْلَى وَ يُقَذَّفُونَ مِنْ كُلِّ جَانِبٍ)

"They cannot listen to the Supreme Assembly and are cast from every side."

Thus, the Supreme Assembly is that realm where the congregation of angels exists.

Furthermore, in Nahj al-Balagha, Amir al-Mu'minin speaks about Allah's special friends:

وَصَحِبُوا الدُّنْيَا بِأَبْدَانٍ أَرْوَاحُهَا مُعَلَّقَةٌ بِالْمَحَلِّ الْأَعْلَى

"They accompany the world with bodies, while their spirits are suspended in the highest place."

They are companions of the world with bodies, yet their souls are suspended in the highest place. Who are these individuals? They are the vicegerents of Allah. These are the ones of whom the Imam says, "Knowledge has overwhelmed them, and that knowledge is based on truth." We must strive to learn even a single word; how much effort is required! Yet the Imam speaks of them, stating, "Knowledge has overwhelmed them." That knowledge which allows them to understand the realities of things. "And they have engaged with the spirit of certainty, and they have found comfort in what the affluent find difficult, and they have found tranquility in what the ignorant find terrifying."

I wish to establish a connection between the supplication and the words of the Imam. Esteemed brothers and sisters! When we recite this Sha'ban supplication, we must consider what we are seeking. We must evaluate what actions we intend to take. Have we prepared our provisions for this long and significant journey, or is it merely a matter of verbal recitation?

The place of divine glory we request is even higher than the Supreme Assembly, where the congregation of angels gathers. In that Supreme Assembly, at least the devils could eavesdrop and be expelled; however, what is mentioned here is the

place of divine glory and the source of greatness; even the devils cannot intrude, as it is pure sanctity. In this context, the essence of everything is subdued.

What is contained in this supplication surpasses that Supreme Assembly mentioned in the verse, and it may be what Amir al-Mu'minin refers to in Nahj al-Balagha: "They accompany the world with bodies, while their souls are suspended in the highest place." These righteous, pure, and sanctified individuals engage with the world in such a manner that their souls are suspended in the highest realm. This passage indicates that this attachment to the higher realm is not merely post-death; it occurs in this world, with the very bodies that you and I possess, while their essence, their souls, is suspended in the Supreme Assembly and that place of sanctity. All they see is Allah. If they see anything else, they see it through Allah. This passage from Nahj al-Balagha may be akin to what is stated in the Sha'ban supplication:

هَجَمَ بِهِمُ الْعِلْمُ عَلَى حَقِيقَةِ الْبَصِيرَةِ وَ بَاشَرُوا رُوحَ الْيَقِينِ وَ اسْتَلَانُوا مَا اسْتَوْعَرَهُ  
الْمُتَرَفُّونَ وَ أَنْسُوا بِمَا اسْتَوْحَشَ مِنْهُ الْجَاهِلُونَ وَ صَحَبُوا الدُّنْيَا بِأَبْدَانٍ أَرْوَاحُهَا مُعَلَّقَةٌ  
«بِالْمَحَلِّ الْأَعْلَى أَوْلَيْكَ خُلَفَاءُ اللَّهِ فِي أَرْضِهِ وَ الدُّعَاءُ إِلَى دِينِهِ آهَ شَوْقاً إِلَى رُؤْيَيْهِمْ»

"You call upon him in secret, while he works openly for You."

You call him in secret signifies that his spirit is suspended in divine glory while his body remains among the people, and it exemplifies: "I become his hearing with which he hears, and his sight with which he sees, and his tongue with which he speaks, and his hand with which he acts. If he calls upon Me, I respond to him, and if he requests, I grant him."

\*Characteristics of Those Suspended in the Place of Divine Glory\*

By comparing this passage from the Sha'ban supplication to the mentioned passage from the sermon, we understand that those who are connected to the place of divine glory, and whose spirits are suspended in the Supreme Assembly, have traversed these dark and luminous veils and attained that degree. They are the ones to whom "Knowledge has overwhelmed them with the truth of insight, and they have engaged with the spirit of certainty." This state of certainty is not trivial. Certainty is a rank such that when a person attains it, they possess everything. Certainty resides deeply in the hearts of Allah's friends. In a narration, it is mentioned that "nothing has been divided among people less than certainty." Indeed! Certainty is a most precious blessing, particularly when it arises from correct knowledge; meaning that it is unwavering and not swayed by the events of time. It is certainty that remains with a person until the last moment.

Another characteristic of those who have been elevated to the divine glory is that when they embrace the spirit of certainty, what the affluent and privileged in this world deem arduous and unpleasant becomes easy and agreeable for them. What is difficult for the ignorant becomes palatable for those who have attained certainty. Patience in the path of the beloved and obedience to Him becomes sweet for the people of certainty:

"They find comfort in what the affluent find difficult."

What terrifies the ignorant and is a source of fear for them becomes a joy for those who possess certainty:

"And they find solace in what the ignorant find unsettling."

Another characteristic is that while they live in this world with these worldly bodies and converse with people according to outward appearances, their souls are suspended in the Supreme Assembly, alongside the sanctified and celestial beings, traversing another realm. In this state, they attain such ranks: "They accompany the world with bodies, while their souls are suspended in the highest place."

And at this point, the servant presents himself before Allah:

"O Allah, make me among those whom You called and they responded, and whom You observed; they fainted in awe of Your majesty and spoke with You in secret while working for You openly."

In this moment, by the grace of Allah, the entire existence of the servant becomes divine, and with the special attention of the Lord, his will merges into divine will, and with a shock, all his selfishness is obliterated and dissolved, and in that state, he sees nothing but the Almighty. He becomes aware of the truth that "He is the First, the Last, the Manifest, and the Hidden," and achieves the realization that "by the light of Your face, which illuminates everything."

In a sermon about the believers of certainty, Amir al-Mu'minin mentions:



"Were it not for the appointed time that Allah has decreed for them, their spirits would not remain in their bodies for the blink of an eye out of eagerness for the reward and fear of punishment."

What is happening? Where are we? How unfortunate are we! How much are we bound to this earthly existence! Our desires have ensnared us! Bad traits and undesirable qualities have captured us! Otherwise, Amir al-Mu'minin states: If it were not for Allah's decree that we must remain in this world until a certain moment, those who have attained certainty would have had their spirits soar towards the divine realm, reaching that source of greatness. In the noble visitation of Amin Allah, we read: "So make my soul... long for the joy of meeting You."

#### \*A Point on the Devil's Deception\*

At this point, it is appropriate to highlight a point to be aware of how the devil uses beautiful methods to obstruct the connection to the higher realms. Unfortunately, some individuals in the Islamic Republic have taken advantage of duplicity to attain the highest positions—and thankfully, their efforts have diminished. I have seen in a certain book a misinterpretation of the noble verse: "And worship your Lord until certainty comes to you."

Essentially, two groups have misunderstood this verse:

One group consists of Sufis and some self-styled mystics—not true mystics—who argue that the meaning of the verse is that we must worship until we reach certainty.

Once we attain certainty, we will no longer need worship. After reaching the connection, seeking is unnecessary, while worship is meant for seeking. What a pity! Can your connection surpass that of the Prophet? Can your connection exceed that of Amir al-Mu'minin, who said, "If the veil were lifted, I would not increase in certainty"? If the veils were removed, nothing would add to my certainty. Have these great figures ever had a moment of being heedless of worship? How astonishing it would be for the meaning of the verse to be: Worship until you reach certainty, and then stop worshipping!

No! This certainty refers to death. If you consult fifty interpretations, you will find that all credible interpretations explain that "And worship your Lord until certainty comes to you" means to worship until your death arrives. This is precisely the opposite of what the Sufis claim. It is akin to the verse in the blessed Surah Al-Muddaththir, which conveys the words of the damned in hell:

"And we used to deny the Day of Judgment until certainty came to us."

Sufis interpret this verse in a similarly distorted manner, and another group, which includes the author of that book, misinterprets this verse in a different way: "And worship your Lord until certainty comes to you." This means the verse says that worship is the way to reach certainty. Of course, the essence of the matter is correct; however, this is not the meaning of the verse. Yes, worship brings certainty; however, the noble verse does not intend to convey this. The verse states: "Until the moment of your death, you must worship." Just as in the blessed Surah Al-Muddaththir, it states that the sinners who are in hell would disobey until the certainty, meaning death, came to them. This means that they were engaged in

disobedience until the moment of death arrived, not that they disobeyed until they reached certainty! Disobedience leads to denial, not certainty.

So why have they interpreted the verse this way? This stems from a deep-seated notion in the minds of such individuals that manifests in such clumsy ways. They wish to imply: You are unnecessarily pursuing knowledge and study; jurisprudence, philosophy, and reason are all pointless; set them aside and focus solely on worship! Moreover, they do not stop there; they argue that worship is a personal matter. Each person finds their own way. Some understand Allah like Hindus, others like Ash'aris, others like Mu'tazilis, and some like you and me. You should not concern yourself with others!

Ultimately, they advocate a form of nationalism! This is enough. We should ask them: What do you understand from "Perhaps you will reason" and "Do they not reflect upon the Quran"? You will see that in the collections of narrations, the first section is about knowledge and ignorance, "The Book of Reason and Ignorance." Can we claim that only worship suffices? What about the position of reason? Certainly, worship is of utmost importance, but it does not mean the suspension of reason. It is reason that serves as the standard and criterion for determining the correctness and incorrectness of all things, even the measure for assessing worship:

"By reason, the servants recognized their Creator... and by reason, they discerned the good from the bad."

Thus, we see that they, in their effort to oppose the seminary, scholars, jurisprudence, and reasoning—which are all highly regarded in Islam—because they claim to be pluralistic, have interpreted the noble verse in such a manner.

Meanwhile, the foundation of Islam is based on reason and deliberation. Islamic mysticism has never been in opposition to reason. May it be damned if it is mysticism that opposes reason! May it be damned if it is mysticism that contradicts the law! Just as stated by Mullah Sadra: "May it be damned if it is philosophy that contravenes the law!"

Now, why do they seek to eliminate thought and reasoning from the seminary and disconnect it from the people? We must assert that this stems either from their ignorance or from carefully calculated plots, or a combination of both.

Unfortunately, in the past seven to eight years, they have propagated such ideas within the Islamic Republic, and even in their official writings. Thankfully, the people have become somewhat aware and cognizant, ultimately reducing the harm they have caused, albeit they continue to operate unofficially.

In any case, Amir al-Mu'minin states: Those who have attained certainty are on the verge of having their spirits soar towards the divine realm out of love and yearning for Allah, and they are precisely the individuals who, according to the Sha'ban supplication, are overwhelmed by the majesty and greatness of the Almighty, working openly for the Most High, and contemplating Him in all their actions, unwilling to take a step for anyone other than Him.

\*The Innate Nature of Love for the Almighty\*

In another passage of the Sha'ban supplication, we express:

"O Allah! I had no strength to transfer myself from disobedience to obedience except when You awakened me to love for You."

Notice that the discourse is not about the instillation of love but the awakening of love. It does not say You implanted love in me; rather, it states that You awakened me to Your love, allowing me to distance myself from disobedience.

But where does this yearning and love come from? This love is inherent in the depths of every human being. By virtue of their nature and creation, humans love their Creator—who is the source of their existence—and their Benefactor, the One who has bestowed countless blessings upon them while being utterly self-sufficient and beautiful. However, sometimes due to sins and external factors, this feeling lies dormant. If there is a catalyst that awakens the individual, that love will surge forth. Hence, if someone does not love their Benefactor, what is the reason? The reason is that they have trampled upon their innate nature, causing it to fall asleep. It is sufficient for the innate nature to awaken for one to find divine love. Of course, this love has signs and manifestations. The sign of divine love is obedience to Allah. If divine love permeates the depths of one's being, one will distance themselves from disobedience. Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him) remarked: "I am astonished by someone who claims to love Allah while simultaneously disobeying Him." He then recited these couplets:

"You disobey the deity while professing your love for Him—this, I swear, is astonishing in deeds! If your love were genuine, you would have obeyed Him; indeed, the lover is obedient to the one they love."

\*Fear and Hope in This Supplication\*

Among the teachings and principles of education present in this supplication is the concept of fear and hope, which permeates it throughout:

"O Allah! If my sins have degraded my status in Your sight, forgive me for the sake of my good trust in You."

"O Allah! If my sins have diminished my access to Your noble mercy, surely certainty has awakened me to Your kindness."

"O Allah! If negligence has lulled me into unpreparedness for meeting You, then my awareness of Your blessings has awakened me."

Fear and hope are two educational tools in Islam. It is narrated:

"A believer cannot be a true believer until they embody both fear and hope."



Fear of divine punishment in light of shortcomings and hope for divine mercy despite all transgressions. In some narrations, it is stated that fear and hope should be balanced in the heart of a believer:

"If these are weighed, neither fear should outweigh hope nor should hope outweigh fear."

It has been narrated from Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him) that in the wisdom imparted by Luqman (peace be upon him) to his son, there are remarkable insights. The Quran states: "And indeed, We granted Luqman wisdom."

One of the wise sayings of Luqman to his son—recorded in the Holy Quran—is: "Do not associate anything with Allah, for associating is a great injustice." The Imam (peace be upon him) said: The most astonishing advice Luqman gave to his son is:

"Fear Allah with a fear that if you were to bring forth the good deeds of both jinn and mankind, He would punish you; and hope in Allah with a hope that if you were to bring forth the sins of both jinn and mankind, He would have mercy upon you."

"O my son! Fear Allah in such a way that even if you bring the good deeds of both jinn and mankind, He would punish you; and be so hopeful of Allah that even if you bring the sins of both jinn and mankind, He would grant you mercy."

If we read to the end of this supplication, we find that, apparently, it differs slightly from the narration. The emphasis on hope is stronger. How can this apparent difference be reconciled with what has been narrated regarding the equality of fear and hope? It seems that this difference relates to circumstances and states. This prayer is recited during a specific time and by particular individuals, under specific conditions, where the aspect of mercy and hope should prevail. Engaging with these sublime themes leads one to the source of greatness. In that realm, the aspect of hope should dominate. However, in ordinary situations, when one is caught in the shadows of materiality and is entangled in the darkness of worldly engagements, transactions, and interactions with others, gossip, slander, and similar issues, at such times, one should not have a condition where hope predominates; otherwise, the devil will exploit it. In such situations, fear and hope should be equal. However, there are moments when hope should be stronger. It seems that at the beginning of youth and early life, these two traits—fear and hope—should be equal. Yet as one ages and desires diminish, and the prospect of death looms closer, one should become more hopeful.

As narrated: "I am with the thought of My servant who believes in Me; if he thinks good, I will grant him goodness."

Additionally, it is narrated that "Allah is most generous; He possesses goodness in His hands and is shy to let a believing servant have a good thought of Him and then not fulfill that thought and hope."

It is also appropriate to encourage the dying to hope for Allah's mercy, so they may leave this world in that state, as has been reported from Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him).

\*A Note on the Beginning and Conclusion of the Supplication with Salawat\*

Among the significant aspects related to this supplication is its commencement and conclusion with blessings upon the Prophet and his pure progeny. The Quran states: "To Him ascends the good word and the righteous deed raises it."

All that is contained within this supplication, comprising the attributes and beautiful names of Allah, is a good word, and righteous deeds can elevate it. The education we receive from this noble supplication has various dimensions. It is narrated that the righteous deed that elevates the good word is the allegiance to the Ahl al-Bayt. Whoever is devoted to the blessings of Salah (salawat) is also devoted to allegiance. If you wish for your supplications to ascend, you must uphold allegiance. Therefore, one of the manifestations of righteous deeds is the remembrance of Salawat.

It is reported that if you begin your supplication with Salawat and conclude with Salawat, since Allah accepts the blessings upon Muhammad, He also accepts your supplications.

This is a principle that both the beginning and the end should mention Muhammad and the family of Muhammad, as "By us, Allah opens and closes."

It is narrated from Aban bin Taghlib that he visited Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him). The Imam said: When you arrive in Kufa, convey this message on my behalf. The Imam said: Tell the people: "Whoever testifies that there is no deity but Allah, with sincerity, Paradise is obligatory for them." Aban bin Taghlib, astonished, said: "If I say that whoever sincerely utters 'There is no god but Allah' will be granted Paradise, then nothing will stand upon another." The Imam replied: "Do not fear. Anyone who does not recognize the matter of allegiance will have their utterance of 'There is no god but Allah' taken from them on the Day of Judgment."

See how the narration states that the noble word "There is no god but Allah," with all its greatness, if one lacks allegiance, will be taken from them. May Allah keep all of us alive by the noble word "There is no god but Allah" and through the allegiance to the Ahl al-Bayt.